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Coordination, programme and other questions: ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict

Assessment of the ad hoc advisory groups of the Economic and Social Council on African countries emerging from conflict

Programme budget implications of draft resolution E/2004/L.29/Rev.1

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council

I. Request contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 4, 7, 8, and 9 of draft resolution E/2004/L.29/Rev.1 (which is to be reissued as E/2004/L.53), the Economic and Social Council would:

(a) Urge the ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict to take into account the following areas for enhancing the effectiveness of their work within their respective mandates:

(i) Fostering the creation of practical recommendations or strategic advice on how to make the transition from relief to development and increasing relationships with the United Nations Development Group/Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs working group on transition issues by exploring the complementary nature of their work;

(ii) Entering into closer contacts and collaboration with regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, the regional economic communities and regional financial organizations, such as the African Development Bank, whose activities are key to the transition processes of the countries concerned;

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(iii) Continuing to strengthen their advice on how to ensure that the assistance of the international community in supporting the countries concerned is adequate, coherent, well-coordinated and effective and promotes synergy, including through exploring modalities to further mobilize additional resources, building on relevant mechanisms of coordination at the country level and at the international level;

(iv) Ensuring the groups' early contribution to and participation in donor conferences on the countries concerned in order to maximize the impact of their advocacy work;

(v) Promoting a further increase in the interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council on the situation in the countries concerned, within their respective mandates;

(b) Express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the support provided to the ad hoc advisory groups and request him to ensure adequate human and technical resources, within existing resources, to provide substantive secretariat support, while making maximum use of existing mechanisms and coordination structures, and to ensure the provision of financial resources to cover the operating costs in order to enable the groups to function in a smooth and optimal manner;

(c) Decide to undertake a further assessment of lessons learned on the experiences of the ad hoc advisory groups, including progress made in the implementation of their mandate, during its substantive session of 2006 and request the Secretary-General to provide a report to the Council in this regard;

(d) Reaffirm that each ad hoc advisory group should be specific to the situation prevailing in each country and that further decisions and resolutions should continue to take into account the specific circumstances of any other African country emerging from conflict that requests the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group.

II. Activities by which the request would be implemented

2. At the outset, the attention of the Economic and Social Council is drawn to the provisions of section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, in which the Assembly reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters and reaffirmed also the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Under the circumstances, the consideration by the Economic and Social Council of the text of paragraph 7 of draft resolution E/2004/L.29/Rev.1 may be considered to be in contravention of resolution 45/248 B as it directly addresses the allocation of resources, which falls within the exclusive prerogative of the Fifth Committee.

3. In response to the terms of draft resolution E/2004/L.29/Rev.1, and bearing in mind the terms of draft resolution E/2004/L.30, currently under consideration by the Economic and Social Council, by which the Council would extend the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau until its organizational session in 2005 in order for the Group to continue monitoring the implementation of its recommendations, it is envisaged that, during this period, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group would participate in the donor conference and round table being organized by

the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), tentatively scheduled for November 2004.

4. In implementing the terms of draft resolution E/2004/L.29/Rev.1, consideration would also be given to the provisions of draft resolution E/2004/L.31, also currently under consideration by the Economic and Social Council, in which the Council would request the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi to follow closely the humanitarian, economic and social conditions in Burundi and to examine the transition from relief to development and the way in which the international community has supported the process. As the follow-up mechanism to donor commitments is in place in Burundi, it is envisaged that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group would undertake a four-day mission to Bujumbura to assess, inter alia, the humanitarian situation and economic and social conditions, as well as the transition from relief to development in Burundi and to report on the progress to the Council at its organizational session in 2005.

III. Estimated resource requirements

5. In order to enable the advisory groups to function in a smooth and optimal manner, necessary requirements will be met, to the extent possible, from within available resources. However, it is envisaged that participation in the donor conference and round table on Guinea-Bissau by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau would give rise to additional requirements, estimated on the basis of past experience at $41,600 to cover travel, daily subsistence allowance and terminal expenses.

6. In addition, a four-day mission to be undertaken by the Advisory Group on Burundi would entail additional resources, estimated on the basis of past experience at $48,700 for travel and related expenses.

IV. Potential for absorption during the biennium 2004-2005

7. It is anticipated that conference-servicing and substantive secretariat support costs required for servicing the Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi would be negligible and would therefore be met from within resources available under the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

8. The potential for absorption of the total requirements of $90,300 within the appropriations approved under section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 has been considered, and it has been determined that these additional resources for travel and related expenses would be required.

V. Contingency fund

9. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional

expenditures were proposed that exceed the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to a later biennium.

VI. Conclusion

10. **Should the Council adopt draft resolution E/2004/L.29/Rev.1, additional resources of $90,300 would be required under section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. This would represent a charge against the contingency fund and, as such, would require an increase in appropriations for the biennium 2004-2005.**